

[Mr. MacCurrie and Josh]

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Mr. MacCurrie And Josh

"How are you makin, out?" inquires Mr. MacCurrie, according to invariable custom. "Are you gettin' any information on the knife business? There's Josh up by the window there—his old mon was a knifemaker, hey Josh?"

"Josh", a young man of twenty five or so who has been reclining comfortably on the small of his back, his chair tilted at a precarious angle and his feet propped against the window sill, looks up from a picture magazine, nods affirmatively.

"Where'd he work before he come here?" asks Mr. MacCurrie.

"He learned his trade in the old country," says Josh. "In Sheffield. When he first came here he worked down at the Challenge Cutlery in Bridgeport. Then he got a job in the Thomaston Knife shop down here't' the Bridge and we moved here."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Never learned you the trade, did he?"

Josh: "I was too young, I was still goin' to school when he died. He started to teach my brother, but he never followed it up. Wouldn't have been any good now, anyway, the trade wouldn't, so it's just as well we never learned it."

Mr. MacCurrie: "The old mon was a grinder, wasn't he Josh?"

Josh: "No, a cutler."

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Mr. MacCurrie: "The old Englishmen kind of looked doon on the grinders. They'd be walkin' up the road, three or four of them, and an old Englishman would say, 'there goes three knifemakers and a bloody groinder.'

Josh: "My old man was a cutler. Not that it makes any difference now. The trade wouldn't be no good to me, even if I'd learned it."

Mr. MacCurrie: "They say anything about takin' you back, over at New Departure?"

Josh: "No. Whoa they lay you off there, it's indefinite."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Well—I remember when your old mon come here. That [Terwilliger?] and his family come about the same time. Lived doon there next to 2 Bellamay. (Addressing me.) Have you seen Bellamay yet? His wife was a Benson—her people were all knifemakers. I think Bellamay used to work in the knife shop too. Bellamay was quite a football soccer(?) player when he was a young mon."

Josh: "They say they had a pretty good team at the Bridge."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Oh, yes. They used to take a lot of pride in their teams. Football and baseball. The jawny bulls got to be great fans. It wasn't so different from the football and cricket they played in the old country. And if they could beat Thomaston they were happy. The Bridge never had over three or four hundred people, and they took partickler pride in beatin, the bigger towns."

Josh: "Any of the knifemakers play?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "Well, Gangloff played. He wasn't rightly a knifemaker but he worked in the shop. The jawny bulls all thought he was great. He wasn't a young mon when he started to play the game. Married and had children. But he was strong as a bull and tough. They used to say he trained by tacklin' the apple trees doon in his yard. When he come home

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after a game he'd say to his kids, 'Well, children, yer father won again.' He had a big black mustache. They said it was mostly pulled off him in a game down in Bridgeport one time."

Josh: "They beat Thomaston much?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "Well, it was about half and half. They used to do a great deal of bettin'. The knifemakers and the clockmakers. Then at the last they combined the two teams and called it All Thomaston. That was when Bellamy started to play. They played in the Plume and Atwood meadow. Right up till Christmas time, some years. I've seen 'em 3 clear the snow off the meadow in the mornin', so's they could play that afternoon."

Josh: "That's a thing of the past, that small town football."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Like a lot of other things. Includin' the knifemakin'. If it had'nt died oot, you probably wouldn't be sittin' around here at the Fire House doin, nothin'."

Josh: "I'm gettin' damn sick of it, too."

Mr. MacCurrie: Well, you may not have to do it much longer. See where they're conscripin' the British lads between nineteen and twenty one? They must have a goddom good reason for it. They must expect war."

Josh: "They won't get me, Andrew, if that's what you mean."

Mr. MacCurrie: "If there's a war, you'll be caught in the first draft, m'lad, you know goddom well you will."

Josh: "I got my mother to take care of, ain't I? How the hell cany they take me?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "They'll get around that, if they need you bad enough. You better get up Friday mornin' and listen to Mr. Hitler. See what he's got to say."

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Josh: "I should get up at six o'clock in the mornin' to hear that screwball! I don't give a damn if he threatens the whole continent of Europe. What do I care?"

Mr. MacCurrie: "You know dom well if there's a war this country will have to get into it, they can't keep oot of it."

Josh: "If they don't stop stickin, their nose into it, they'll get in it. They ought to let well enough alone."

Mr. MacCurrie: "They've got to back up the democracies. Where will this country be if England and France lose the next war?"

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Josh: "Right where they are now, Andrew. That's just a lotta goddamn baloney and you know it."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Why, goddom it, Japan is just waitin' for a chance at this country. They're in with Hitler and Mussolini, ain't they? First chance they get they'll grab the Phillippines and maybe Hawaii. What do you think they sent the fleet around to the Pacific coast for? That was a warnin' to Japan, that's what it was."

Josh: "It's all a lotta baloney Andrew. Japan's got all they can take care of right in China for some years to come."

Mr. MacCurrie: "Why goddom it—"

Josh: "I heard enough baloney for today, Andrew. I'm goin'." He leaves.

Mr. MacCurrie: "He's a pretty good kind of a lad, but you can't tell him anything."